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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 000350

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OSD/ISA FOR ALLEN/POWERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2016

TAGS: PREL TH POL MIL

SUBJECT: BRIGADIER GENERAL ALLEN'S MEETING WITH SENIOR
ROYAL THAI SUPREME COMMAND CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ALEX A. ARVIZU FOR REASONS 1.4(B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: During a January 16 call at Royal Thai Supreme Command (RTSC) Headquarters, Department of Defense Principal Director for Asian and Pacific Affairs for International Security Affairs Brigadier General John Allen expressed his appreciation to RTSC Chief of Joint Staff General Lertrat Ratanavich for Thailand's role in aiding and rebuilding the region after the 2004 tsunami. General Lertrat said that he plans to be in Washington March 13-14 to visit the Joint Forces Command and discuss transformational opportunities as discussed between Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Prime Minister Thaksin last year. General Allen also urged a Thai response to participation in the Defense Resources Management Program. In response to General Allen's query on Sino-Thai military relations, General Lertrat described the two nations' armed forces cooperation as "level," not rising or falling. End summary.

¶2. (C) On January 16 Department of Defense Principal Director for Asian and Pacific Affairs for International Security Affairs, Brigadier General John Allen called on Royal Thai Supreme Command (RTSC) Chief of Joint Staff General Lertrat Ratanavich. General Allen thanked General Lertrat for Thailand's role in aiding and rebuilding the region after the 2004 tsunami, especially its prompt opening of U-Tapao Naval Airbase for regional relief operations. General Lertrat commented that conditions are fast returning to normal in the Thai affected regions and said that the goal now was to get tourists back to revive the economy.

¶3. (C) In response to General Allen's query on Sino-Thai military relations, General Lertrat described the two nations' armed forces cooperation as "level," not rising or falling. He added that the Thai military continues to have a much greater degree of cooperation and interaction with its "oldest ally," the United States, than with China. General Allen added that though U.S.-Sino military ties have not included operations-related activities, we are beginning educational exchanges, a positive outcome of Secretary Rumsfeld's visit to China last year.

¶4. (C) General Lertrat said that he plans to be in Washington March 13-14 to visit the Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) to study transformational opportunities. He added that, if necessary, he could extend his visit for further discussions in Washington. General Lertrat said that he is interested in visiting JFCOM in Norfolk and in learning more about transformational activities. He was particularly interested in understanding how the U.S. armed forces are transforming, adding that the RTG has appointed 10 committees to study a range of aspects to the Thai armed forces transformation, from unit restructuring to logistics to a switch to a military/civilian mix in its personnel system. General Lertrat is also interested in how the U.S. military would conduct the Defense Resource Management Study (DRMS) offered to Thailand.

¶5. (C) General Allen responded that in visiting JFCOM the Thai could gain insights on transformation in organization, education, systems and equipment. A very important area, he added, is in military education and how it can be applied to enhance joint and special operations. General Allen said that briefings on the DRMS could be added to the General's program while he is in the U.S. He repeated the invitation for Thailand to send officers to the Philippines to view that country's DRMS program and benefits. Allen cautioned, however, that as much as we want Thai participation in the program, time is running out and we would need an answer shortly or we will have to invite others in Thailand's place for this slot. Lertrat replied that RTSC will brief the Prime Minister shortly on the U.S. offer and he would likely have an answer before he comes to the U.S.

¶6. (U) BGen Allen has cleared this message.
ARVIZU